



Caroline Dinenage

**MP for Gosport,
Lee-on-the-Solent,
Stubbington and
Hill Head**



I was relieved that the UK will remain united after the Scottish Referendum

Like many, I was relieved that the Scottish people voted to remain part of the United Kingdom this month and believe that we are stronger together. However, the referendum has underlined the unfairness in the existing devolution framework and I feel strongly that now is the time to ensure that, moving forward, only English MPs can vote for English laws.

Back in Westminster, I continued my campaign for better transport links to our area by asking the Leader of the House for a debate on the rail route to London. I also spoke to South West Trains about the matter and have a meeting scheduled with the company to discuss it in greater detail next month.

During a meeting with the new Minister for the Portsmouth area, Matt Hancock MP, we spoke about the obstacles which are preventing the Gosport peninsular from reaching its full potential. The Minister accepted my invitation to our side of Portsmouth Harbour on one of his forthcoming visits to the area.

We have a fantastic small business hub on our doorstep: Gosport Basepoint Centre which is home to a range of fledgling businesses. I was invited for a tour of the site and saw the thriving business community in action. Another flourishing business hub is the Daedalus Enterprise Zone where businesses received a boost with news that they can apply for up to £1 million funding in order to expand. The CEMAST college also opened on the site at the start of September, welcoming almost 600 engineering pupils on to its roll.

Given the role that small businesses are playing in Britain's economic recovery the Government must protect their interests. The Small Business Bill will help address many issues, including late payment. During questions to the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, I called on the Business Secretary to tighten up the code even further to protect small businesses from payment delays.

Gosport played host to some exciting marine events this month. Firstly, the P1 'Grand Prix of the Sea' saw thousands flock to Stokes Bay for the powerboat race finale; then 130 ambitious sailors took part in a Guinness World Record attempt at the largest sailing race in aid of the Andrew 'Bart' Simpson Sailing Foundation.

It was great to see local marine businesses flying the flag for Gosport at the Southampton Boat Show: the Gosport Marine Scene group was there in force! I also got the chance to chat to Sir Ben Ainslie about the plans for his Portsmouth Harbour based America's Cup Venture; this is fantastic news for jobs and investment, particularly in Gosport which will provide a vital part of the supply chain.



At Basepoint Centre



At the Southampton Boat Show

The Business, Innovation & Skills Select Committee published its report on adult literacy and numeracy: youtu.be/eC33GxFBCYc. I fought hard for this inquiry to take place and hope that the findings will push the Government to take action to tackle the huge skills gap in the UK. Part of the inquiry looked at how we can boost literacy and numeracy in prisons so I called on the Justice Secretary, Chris Grayling MP, to look closely at the reports recommendation for opening prison libraries over weekends.

Back on the south coast, I spoke at the AGM of the local Neighbourhood Watch network. These initiatives play a crucial role in combatting crime in collaboration with local police forces. In Gosport town centre, the community came together for a

clean up event organised by Gosport and Lee Litter Action; my youngest son and I joined over 100 others all doing their bit to keep our area clean and tidy. I took the opportunity to plug the fantastic work of this group during questions to the Department of Community and Local Government.

I paid a visit to the Fareham and Gosport branches of YOU, an organisation which helps those with disabilities to live in their own homes. In recent months, I have become concerned about the delays faced by constituents awaiting Personal Independence Payment applications so I raised the matter in questions to the Department for Work and Pensions and received reassurance that work is being done to address this.

Next month is Breast Cancer Awareness Month so I pledged my support to the 'wear it pink' campaign – you can join me to raise money for this important cause by wearing pink on Friday 24th October. I hosted a breast cancer charity, BosomBuddies,

in Westminster to promote their work to MPs. The charity sends breast cancer survivors into schools to educate girls about the signs and symptoms of this disease as well as offering support and advice.

I know many local people have been affected by lengthy waits at Queen Alexandra Hospital: *The News* reported that 4 in 10 people turn up at A&E unnecessarily. It's a cause for concern, that's why a task force of local health bosses has been formed to seek a solution. Local MPs including myself met with this team to discuss the problems and have suggested running a survey to find out why people are not using alternative services such as minor injuries units at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Finally this month, Parliament was recalled to debate the use of air strikes in Iraq. Involvement in any form of military action is not something I support lightly. I went to Parliament still undecided about how I would vote and looking for reassurances that involvement would not entail British combat troops on the ground and a commitment to a vote in Parliament if any further action is needed. The PM stressed that the Iraqi Government has directly asked us for help; that 60 other countries including 10 Arab nations are also involved and the growing threat to British people at home if ISIS are not tackled. It is for that reason that I supported the motion.

My mobile surgeries will be continue around the area in the coming weeks: I'll be at Gosport Discovery Centre on Friday 3rd October and Bridgemary Library on Friday 7th November. No appointment necessary!

Best wishes

Caroline

GET IN TOUCH

Please feel free to contact me on any issue, or to find out when my next surgery is. I'm always happy to arrange tours of the Palace of Westminster and Big Ben for my constituents. Please contact my office at least three months in advance to make sure you get a place - the tours are very popular!

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At the 'Big Clean Up' litter pick



Wearing it pink!



With 'BosomBuddies' in Parliament